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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KWBG](#) [UNAUS](#) [FR](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH-EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL "POSITIVE" BUT NOT
ACCEPTED

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Cunningham, Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Despite press reports quoting an Elysee announcement to that effect, Israel has not accepted the ceasefire proposal made by President Mubarak of Egypt and President Sarkozy of France on January 7. MOD and PMO sources confirmed that Israel still has serious concerns regarding the the sequencing of a ceasefire and the steps that need to be taken to combat smuggling. MFA contacts added that the press statement issued by the PMO on January 7 (text below) was intended to make clear that an agreement has not been reached. All GOI interlocutors separately emphasized the importance of a credible arrangement on the Gaza border with Egypt as a virtual precondition to a ceasefire (Note: Israel conducted an extensive bombing campaign on the Philadelphi corridor that has continued thorugh January 7). The MOD's Political Military Director, Amos Gilad, will meet with EGIS Director Omar Suleiman on January 8. Press reports indicate that Egyptian President Mubarak has invited PM Olmert to Egypt, while the MFA told the DCM that Mubarak has asked Abu Mazen to come to Cairo on Saturday, January 10.

¶2. (C) PMO sources told the Ambassador that the GOI was still considering its options and awaiting the results of Gilad's trip to Egypt. The discussions between Sarkozy and Olmert were different in some key respects from what Mubarak announced following Sarkozy's visit to Damascus, particularly in terms of sequencing of a ceasefire and steps to combat smuggling. PMO sources added that part of the original understanding with Sarkozy was that France, as UNSC president, would prevent a vote on a Security Council resolution.

¶3. (C) Israeli contacts have complained that the French announcement of a ceasefire agreement, while not true, had created considerable confusion among surprised Israel politicians and led to some inaccurate press stories that the government was in disarray. But our PMO contacts have asserted that the divisions within the GOI and the IDF are not a serious as some in the press are playing them.

¶4. (C) MG Amos Gilad told the Ambassador on January 7 that he will go by himself to Egypt on January 8 to meet with EGIS Director Omar Suleiman as a representative of the PM, FM, and MOD to discuss possible arrangements (Note: Gilad's staff confirmed on January 8 that he had departed, and press reports indicate he has landed). While Gilad was not sure what he would be able to do, he was going at Egypt's invitation and acknowledged the importance of direct discussions. Gilad indicated his primary goal is to convince Egypt of the link between improving border security and averting a wider military operation. Gilad also believes that the MOU approach is a mistake because the issue is not getting an agreement from Egypt, but what Egypt actually does.

¶5. (C) Finally, as acting COGAT, Gilad told the Ambassador he believed that real gains had been made on humanitarian issues. The Ambassador responded that much more needed to be

done, emphasizing that problems on the humanitarian side were victories for Hamas.

¶6. (U) The following is the text of the January 7 press release from the Prime Minister's Office:

BEGIN TEXT

Israel is working to improve the security reality in the south of the country. Israel thanks Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicholas Sarkozy for their efforts to advance a solution for halting terrorist actions from Gaza and the smuggling of war materiel into the Gaza Strip from Egypt. Israel views as positive the dialogue between Egyptian and Israeli officials in order to advance these issues.

END TEXT

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